
Schools Forum 14 November 2023

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools 2023/24

Purpose of Report

1. For Schools Forum to approve amendments to the Local Authority's Scheme for Financing Schools.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

2. No revised Scheme is to come into force unless approved by the Schools Forum or the Secretary of State in accordance with Part 4 of the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.
3. Section 48 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 obliges Local Authorities to establish and maintain a Scheme for Financing Schools dealing with how a Local Authority will finance the schools that it maintains.
4. In line with the Regulations, revisions to a Local Authority's Scheme for Financing Schools can only be implemented once a Local Authority has consulted with their maintained schools and obtained the approval of either their Schools Forum or the Secretary of State for Education.
5. However, amendments to a Scheme for Financing Schools, that are necessary to enable it to comply with changes to the law introduced by the Regulations, do not require consultation or the approval of a Schools Forum.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Schools Forum approve revisions to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools as detailed at Appendix A, for implementation with immediate effect.

Background

7. The proposed changes to the Scheme for Financing Schools were issued on 03 November 2023. As these relate only to clarification of existing information no formal consultation was required before the scheme is submitted.
8. The proposed amendments are detailed in Appendix A. In summary, the local revisions proposed are:

Important changes to the guidance issued by the DfE.

- 5.4 – Further guidance on retention of funds from the sale of assets.

Local Revisions

- Updated to reflect Council Structure, Contact details, dates and guidance links.
 - 2.1.2 – Update to bring in line with SFVS guidance.
 - 2.8 - Update to bring in line with Scheme for Financing Schools guidance.
 - 2.17 – Update to reflect latest fraud reporting process.
 - 3.5.2 – Removal of reference to delegated banking.
 - 3.6 – Update to IFRS 16 introduction date.
 - 10.1 – Removal of reference to LA insurance.
 - 13.7 – Update to reflect latest guidance
9. Schools Forum members representing maintained mainstream schools that are eligible to vote are as follows:

Primary School members – Mrs Hannaway, Mrs Harris, Ms Maskell, Ms Parkes, Mrs Belcher, Mrs Morgan and Mr Roe.

Secondary school members – Mr Harris and Mrs Watson.

Special School Members – Miss Colbourne and Mr Leyshon.

Nursery School Member – Mrs Ward.

Budget Working Group Discussed

10. Yes – 7 November 2023.

Finance

11. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

12. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances.
13. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Risk Management

14. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

15. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

16. This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

Commercial/Procurement

17. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

Environment/Climate Change

18. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

Council Priorities and Projects

19. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.



Catherine Driscoll
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: James Wilson – Senior Principal Accountant

Telephone: 01384 815864

Email: james.wilson@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Documents

Appendix A – Local Revisions to Dudley's Scheme for Financing Schools.